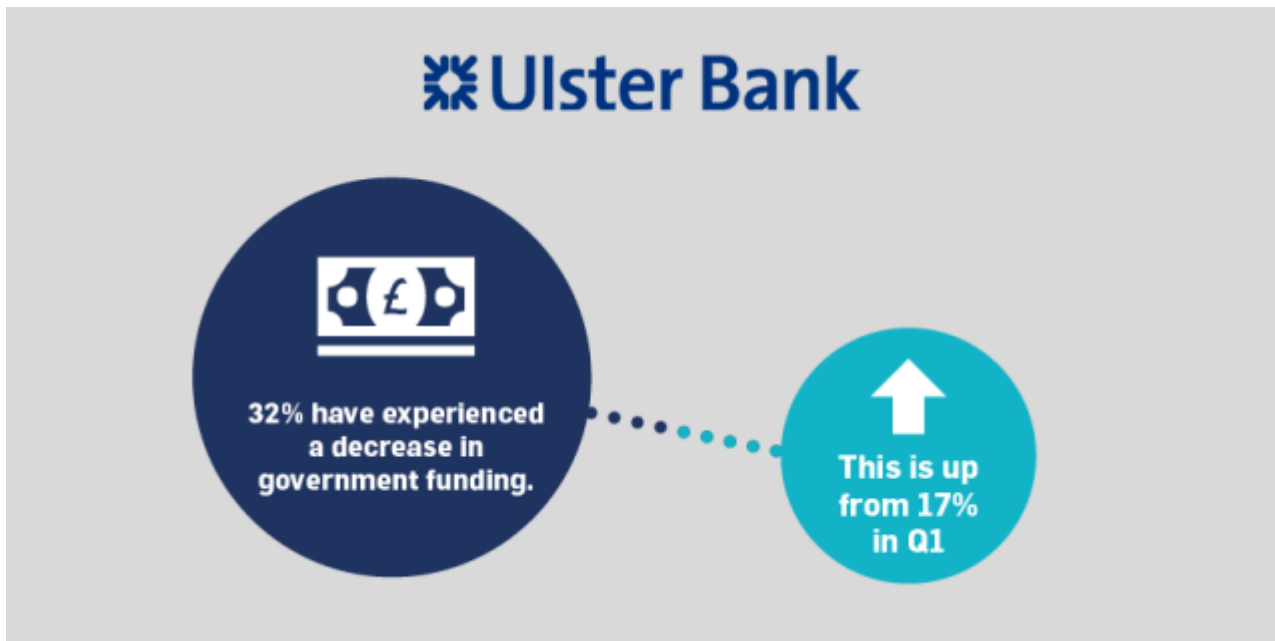


The political impasse has been hitting third sector organisations hard, a new report suggests.



The Ulster Bank & CO3 3rd Sector Index points to a near-doubling in the number of charities reporting a reduction in their government funding – from 17% last quarter to 32% now.

And most leaders (76%) of third sector organisations state that the lack of an Executive has had a negative impact on their organisation.

Charities' finances appear to be under more pressure this quarter too – with an increasing number of leaders in the sector saying that their organisation is experiencing cash flow issues.

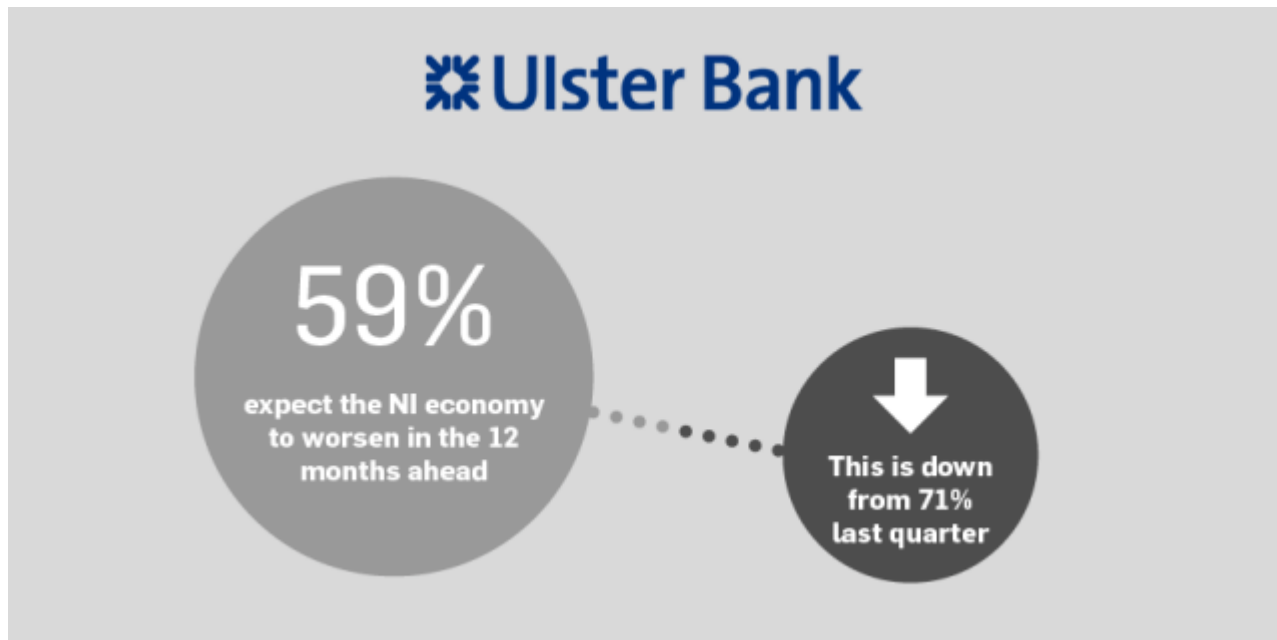
The percentage was up from 28% last quarter to 31% now.



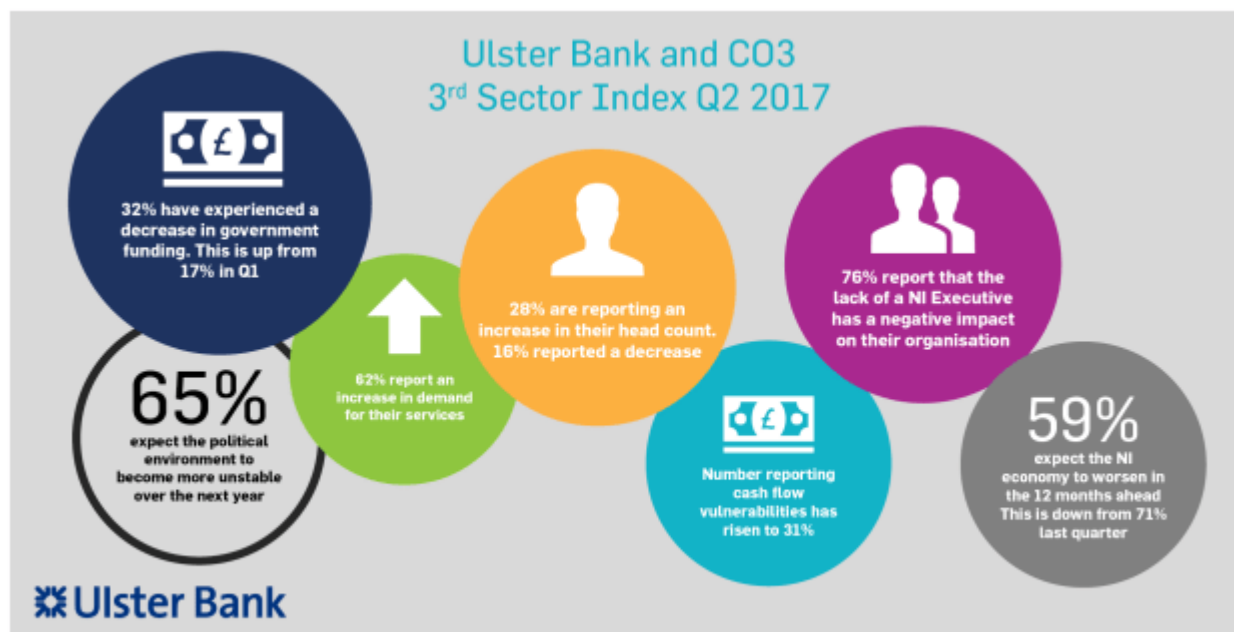
The Ulster Bank & CO3 3rd Sector Index is a barometer of Northern Ireland's third sector, involving a quarterly survey of CO3 members who include the leaders of some of Northern Ireland's largest charities and social enterprises through to small community groups.

The survey is carried out by Perceptive Insight, based on a survey of almost 200 leaders of third sector organisations.

Looking ahead 65% of third sector leaders believe that political stability will worsen over the next year, with 16% believing that it will improve. Third sector organisations have though become less pessimistic about the political outlook, with 59% believing that the outlook will worsen in the 12 months ahead, compared to 71% in Q1.



The latest index is a strong indication of the extent of the challenge the current political impasse is presenting for organisations in Northern Ireland’s third sector, who provide a wide range of important services, from care provision to skills development. We’ve already heard from business organisations in recent days about the impact the lack of a budget is having on the private sector, and third sector bodies are perhaps even more in the frontline. An Executive in place to agree a budget is one important part of the jigsaw for the economy, and the recently announced £1 billion extra in funding from Westminster will no doubt be helpful. But we also need to see timely and effective delivery across government including in areas such as planning, procurement and public services at large.



The survey findings are based on 146 questionnaires that were completed by 3rd sector leaders in Northern Ireland during June 2017

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